

CHAPTER IV

THE COMING OF JETHRO FAWC

GABRIEL DRUSE's house stood on a little knoll on the outskirts of the town of Manitou, backed by a grove of pines. Its front windows faced the Sagalac, and the windows behind looked into cool coverts where in old days many Indian tribes had camped; where Hudson's Bay Company's men had pitched their tents to buy the red man's furs. But the red man no longer set up his tepee in these secluded groves; the wapiti and red deer had fled to the north never to return, the snarling wolf had stolen into regions more barren; the ceremonial of the ancient people no longer made weird the lonely nights; the medicine-man's incantations, the harvest-dance, the green-corn-dance, the sun-dance had gone. The braves, their women, and their tepees had been shifted to reservations where Governments solemnly tried to teach them to till the field, and grow corn, and drive the cart to market; while yet they remembered the herds of buffalo which had pounded down the prairie like storm-clouds and given their hides for the tepee; and the swift deer whose skins made the wigwam luxurious.

Originally Manitou had been the home of Icelanders, Mennonites, and Doukhobors; settlers from lands where the conditions of earlier centuries prevailed, who, simple as they were in habits and in life, were ignorant, primitive, coarse, and none too cleanly. They had formed an unprogressive polyglot settlement, and the place assumed a still more primeval character when the Indian Reservation was formed near by. When French Canadian settlers